



## 2006 BULL TROUT REGULATIONS

Beginning in 2004, bull trout fishing was permitted in four western district waters of Montana: Hungry Horse Reservoir, South Fork Flathead River, Lake Koocanusa and Swan Lake. All other waters in Montana are closed to intentional fishing for bull trout. These four fisheries are very restrictive because bull trout are listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. See pages 2 and 3 for site-specific regulations. It is hoped that this permitted angling will increase public support for management of stable bull trout populations, restoration of bull trout habitat, and for other management activities that will increase the distribution and abundance of bull trout populations throughout the state.

### BULL TROUT CATCH CARD

A FWP catch card is required and must be in the angler's possession while intentionally fishing for bull trout in the main stem South Fork Flathead River upstream of Hungry Horse Reservoir, and when fishing for or harvesting bull trout from Hungry Horse Reservoir and Lake Koocanusa. A catch card is not required for bull trout fishing on Swan Lake. Catch cards will provide FWP with critical management information obtained through follow-up surveys. Whether you fish for bull trout or not, your catch card must be returned to FWP, 490 N. Meridian Rd., Kalispell, MT. 59901, at the end of the fishing season, or sooner if you no longer intend to fish for bull trout or your license has expired. **Turning in your 2006 Catch Card to FWP is a prerequisite for obtaining a 2007 Catch Card. You will not be able to obtain a 2007 Catch Card unless you have turned in your 2006 Catch Card.** You can help us better manage these fisheries by keeping accurate records while fishing for bull trout. Your catch card may not be transferred, borrowed, altered, or loaned to another person.

Catch cards must be individually validated for Hungry Horse Reservoir, South Fork Flathead River, and Lake Koocanusa. Applications/catch cards are available through the FWP Region One Office or online at [www.fwp.mt.gov](http://www.fwp.mt.gov) for no charge. The catch card and your fishing license must be in possession at all times when on these waters and fishing for bull trout. **Duplicate cards will not be issued, so take good care of your bull trout catch card.**

**Immediately upon harvesting a bull trout from the permitted water, or if releasing a bull trout in the South Fork Flathead River, you must record the following information in ballpoint pen on your catch card:**

- Zone
- Length of bull trout to the nearest ½" (estimated length from the S. Fk Flathead River)
- Month of harvest
- Day of harvest
- Cut out one notch for each bull trout harvested from Hungry Horse Reservoir or Lake Koocanusa

### BULL TROUT SEASON, LIMITS AND RESTRICTIONS

	Hungry Horse Res.	Lake Koocanusa	S. Fork Flathead River	Swan Lake
<b>Bull Trout Harvest</b>	Open 3rd Sat. in May through Aug. 15. 2 bull trout per year, 1 per day.	Open June 1 through Feb. 28. 2 bull trout per year, 1 per day.	No harvest allowed. Catch and release only from the 3rd Sat. in May through Aug. 15.	Open all year. 1 daily and in possession. All bull trout must be released unharmed immediately, or killed and counted as your limit.
<b>Catch and Release</b>	Open August 16 through 3rd Friday in May.	Open March 1 through May 31.	Open 3rd Saturday in May through Aug. 15. All bull trout must be released unharmed immediately.	

NOTE: It is unlawful to possess a live bull trout for any reason.

## SEASONS, LIMITS AND RESTRICTIONS FOR BULL TROUT

### Hungry Horse Reservoir

Wounded Buck Bay is closed to fishing for bull trout.

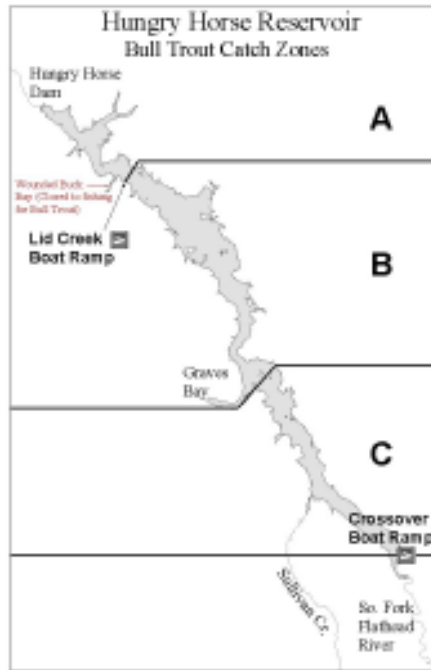
For purposes of this regulation, Hungry Horse Reservoir extends from Hungry Horse Dam south to the Forest Service Crossover boat ramp. The southern most boundary of the reservoir is a line extending due west from the Forest Service Crossover boat ramp. South of this line and upstream shall be considered the South Fork Flathead River.

#### Season/Limits:

One bull trout daily and in possession from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday in May through August 15<sup>th</sup>. A maximum of two per license year per angler may be taken from Hungry Horse Reservoir. Catch and release fishing only for bull trout from August 16<sup>th</sup> through the third Friday in May. A current Hungry Horse Reservoir Catch Card must be in possession when fishing for bull trout. All bull trout must be released immediately or killed and counted as your limit when harvest is allowed. It is unlawful to possess a live bull trout for any reason.

#### Hungry Horse Catch Zones:

Identify zone (A, B, or C) on catch card where bull trout was taken.



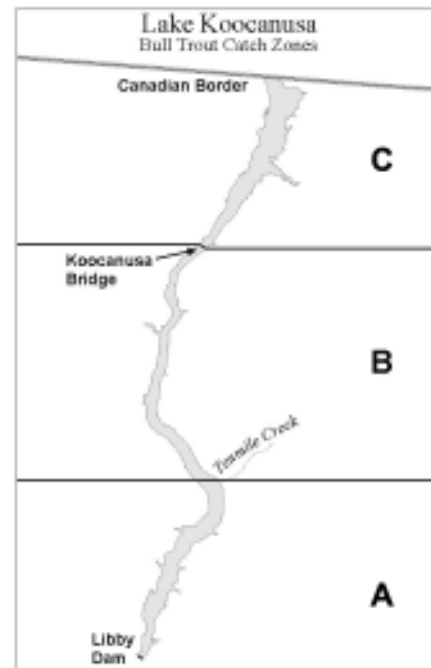
### Lake Koocanusa (Libby Reservoir)

#### Season/Limits:

One bull trout daily and in possession from June 1<sup>st</sup> through February 28<sup>th</sup>. A maximum of two per license year per angler may be taken from Lake Koocanusa. Catch and release only from March 1<sup>st</sup> through May 31<sup>st</sup>. A current Lake Koocanusa Bull Trout Catch Card must be in possession when fishing for bull trout. All bull trout must be released immediately or killed and counted as your limit when harvest is allowed. It is unlawful to possess a live bull trout for any reason.

#### Lake Koocanusa Catch Zones:

Identify zone (A, B, or C) on catch card where bull trout was taken.



### South Fork Flathead River

For purposes of this regulation, the South Fork Flathead River extends from Crossover boat ramp south and upstream to the confluence of Youngs' and Danaher creeks.

#### Season/Limits:

Catch and release fishing for bull trout from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday in May through August 15<sup>th</sup>. Closed to fishing for bull trout from August 16 through the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday in May. A current South Fork Flathead Bull Trout Catch Card must be in possession when fishing for bull trout. All bull trout must be released immediately. It is unlawful to possess a live bull trout for any reason.

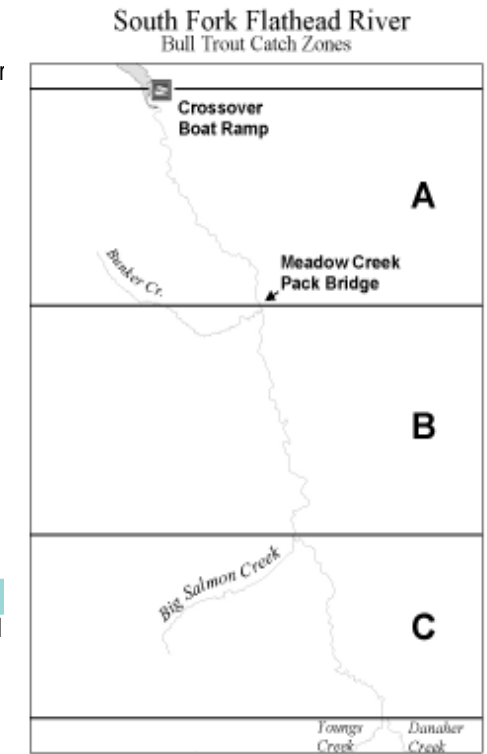
#### South Fork Flathead Catch Zones:

Identify zone (A, B, or C) on catch card where bull trout was taken.

### Swan Lake

One bull trout daily and in possession. All bull trout must be released immediately or killed and counted as your limit. It is unlawful to possess a live bull trout for any reason.

Catch card not required.



## CATCH-AND-RELEASE FISHING

Use of proper handling techniques will improve the chance of survival for any fish released. A fish that is released may still die from deep hooking injury, internal organ damage from being squeezed, bacterial infections resulting from loss of slime in the handling process, effects of physical stress from being played to long, heat shock, or lack of oxygen from being held in warm or poorly oxygenated water.

#### Anglers can help fish survival by using the following techniques:

- Fish with artificial flies and lures with single, barbless hooks to reduce fish injury and handling time.
- Play the fish as rapidly as possible to minimize exhaustion.
- Keep the fish in water when handling and removing the hook. Needle nose pliers or forceps are helpful.
- Remove the hook gently and do not squeeze the fish or place fingers in the gills.
- If the fish is deeply hooked, cut the line leaving about 1" of leader. Do not pull the hook out, as it will degrade rapidly.
- Release the fish only after it has gained equilibrium. If necessary, hold it in a swimming position facing into the current or water moving it slowly back and forth until it recovers.
- Release the fish in quiet water close to the area where it was caught.

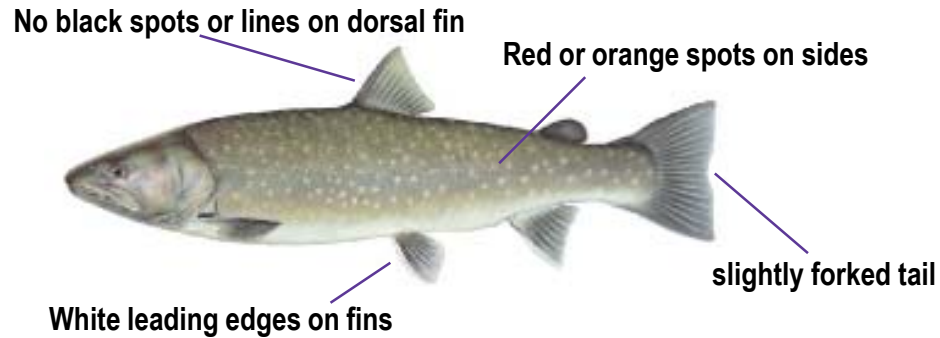
#### Lake / Reservoir Fishing From Boats

Fish caught from deep water may be unable to vent their air bladder and may "bloat". Puncturing the air bladder is not recommended. A simple release tool will facilitate releasing the fish in deep water recompressing it quickly. All you need is a 50- foot cord, a weight and a hook. Dull the hook, flatten the barb and attach the hook inline just above the weight with knots at the hook eye and bend. The hook should be pointing down toward the eye. Place the hook over the lower jaw of the fish and let the weight drop, pulling the fish down to depth rapidly. A tug on the cord will release the fish.

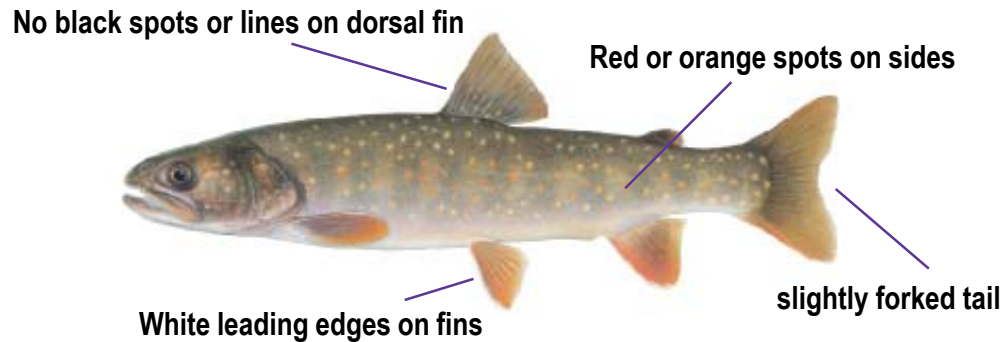
# Bull Trout Identification Guide

## Bull Trout Identification Guide

**Adult fish, typically greater than 16"**



**Juvenile fish, typically less than 16"**



**Please Note:** Anglers that fail to properly validate their bull trout catch card, exceed the specified limits, violate the season restrictions, or possess a dead bull trout without a properly validated catch card, will be in violation of Montana fishing regulations and may also be prosecuted for violation of the Endangered Species Act.

**Remember:** take a ballpoint pen with you when you go fishing for bull trout.